



TOMPKINS COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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EMC Resolution 1-2005: Requesting the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation continue the requirements of the current Lake Source Cooling Monitoring Plan for the duration of the existing SPDES Permit (3/1/2008)

WHEREAS, Cayuga Lake is a centerpiece of our community that provides environmental, recreational, social, and economic resources, and

WHEREAS, the Lake Source Cooling heat-exchange facility draws cold water from the deep waters of Cayuga Lake to cools its buildings and returns the warmer water to the shallow, south end of the Lake, and

WHEREAS, The Lake Source Cooling heat-exchange facility provides economic benefits to Cornell by using 80 percent less energy than a conventional cooling system, and

WHEREAS, There is considerable community concern for maintaining and even enhancing the water quality of Cayuga Lake, and

WHEREAS, A water-quality monitoring plan was submitted and accepted by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) as a condition of the original State Pollution Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit granted to Cornell University, and

WHEREAS, the sampling required by the monitoring plan has been in place since 1998 with two years of data prior to plant operation and three years of data since the facility went into operation in 2000, and

WHEREAS, The DEC renewed the SPDES permit for Lake Source Cooling in 2003 for another five-year term with no change to the original monitoring plan, and

WHEREAS, Cornell University has now requested modifications to the current Lake Source Cooling Monitoring Plan, including reducing the number of monitoring sites, as stated in their letter to the DEC dated July 29, 2004 related to SPDES permit #NY 024 4741, and

WHEREAS, Three years of data since the plant went into operation is not enough to establish any statistical water quality trends due to the very nature of the constantly fluctuating natural environment in Cayuga Lake, and

WHEREAS, Continued monitoring at the same sampling sites for at least the remainder of the current five-year SPDES permit will better enable the separation of impacts that are a result of the fluctuating natural environment from those that could be occurring as a result of the Lake Source Cooling facility, and

WHEREAS, During the monitoring period planned reductions in phosphorus discharges from the Ithaca Area Waste Water Treatment Plant that also empties into the south end of the Lake will be implemented, and

WHEREAS, During the monitoring period newly constructed Cornell buildings will come into use, increasing the amount of Lake Source Cooling capacity in use, and

WHEREAS, On the basis of all these facts and a review of pertinent documents, on November 12, 2004, the EMC's Environmental Review committee sent a letter to the DEC urging no reduction in monitoring, and

WHEREAS, The Town of Ithaca's consultant, Benchmark Environmental Engineering & Science, after completing an independent review of the water-quality monitoring reports related to the Lake Source Cooling facility from 1998 to 2002, recommended that the current monitoring plan remain essentially in place, and

WHEREAS, The Town of Ithaca endorsed the recommendations of Benchmark Environmental Engineering & Science in resolution no. 2004-179 on November 15, 2004, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council requests that the DEC continue the requirements of the current Lake Source Cooling Monitoring Plan, including maintaining data collection at all current monitoring stations, for at least the duration of the existing SPDES Permit, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution is forwarded to the Director of the Division of Water, Region 7 of the NYS DEC.

Date: January 12, 1005

Voting in Favor: 15

Voting Against: 1

Abstentions: 0

cc: Tompkins County Legislators

Michael Culotta, Conservation Advisory Board Chair, City of Ithaca

Cheryl Horney, Environmental Compliance Coordinator, Environmental Compliance Office, Cornell University

Pam Mackesey, Common Council, City of Ithaca

Catherine Valentino, Supervisor, Town of Ithaca